

Seattle City Council

Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee Meeting

2 p.m. Friday, April 2nd 2010

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Priya Keefe**

Today's poet is **Thomas Thomas**

Thomas Thomas studied at the University of Michigan (UM) with Donald Hall and Gregory Orr, worked on a few poems with Robert Bly, and won Minor and Major Hopwood Awards in Poetry. His poem "Approaching Here" was choreographed and performed at UM. Thomas has been published in "Anesthesia Review", "The Periodical Lunch" and "Oberon". He designed, typeset, and published a collection of poems in 2005 under the title "Getting Here" which received an Honorable Mention in the 14th Annual Writer's Digest International Self-Published Book Awards. His poem "William Speaks" is scheduled to be published by Writer's Digest later this year.

William Speaks (Man Found Dead)

by Thomas Thomas

I'm a 58 year old French Canadian Indian Viet Nam Vet
he says,
and I can't stop drinking

I feel like the ghosts of those men I killed
like they're livin' inside me 'cause they don't know they're dead and
drinkin' makes 'em quiet awhile

I been runnin' you see
livin' under bushes 'n benches, hidin' under them pilings,
I know I should stop drinkin' but I wake up 'n their blood
is comin' out my nose 'n mouth
I'm cold you got somethin' I could eat?

I know I gotta stop drinkin' man
but I got three languages I can't speak,
French, English, Algonquin you know so I can't tell you how

dark 'n cold it is inside so I can't stop drinkin'

but that coffee looks good right now,
if I could have some and you don't tell me to try
gettin' sober one more time...

'cause I can't stop drinkin' an' I won't take those meds
and no thanks on the ride to detox 'cause I can't breathe indoors
and thanks for the fiver but I gotta get goin' gotta
keep movin' and I can't breathe 'cept for outside, and I
can't stop drinkin'

I'm outta here, he says. Hey El Gato Man, Hey, hey Angel!

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